Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Vision

St Paul's School serves the whole community, whatever the individual faiths or beliefs of families are. Our vision, working together, is to shape the child, and therefore the adult, drawing on Christian insights, to understand how to live fully and 'shine as lights in the world.' (Philippians 2.15)

St Paul's School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- St Paul's Christian vision and associated values act as a driver of school decisions and actions. This has a positive impact on pupils' and adults' development and well-being, allowing them to live their lives fully.
- Religious education (RE) is prioritised and highly valued by the school. Strong leadership, an ambitious curriculum and thoughtful inclusion enables pupils, including those with additional needs, to enjoy learning and make good progress overall.
- St Paul's is a school where people are valued, welcomed and respected. Thankfulness and service are examples of values that are lived out to support a culture where pupils and adults are treated well.
- Leaders and governors are deeply committed to serving their community with wisdom and compassion. They are continuously ambitious, working on school development through a rigorous cycle of evidence gathering, evaluation and improvement.
- Strong partnerships and relationships, with the church, diocese and parents, exemplify the school's vision of working together. They serve to strengthen the school and contribute to an inclusive community where pupils and adults flourish.

Development Points

- Strengthen the shared understanding of spirituality across the school and how it grows over time. This is to extend and increase the opportunities for spiritual development that are already in place and enhance spiritual growth.
- Build on pupils' sense of fairness and responsibility to understand the deeper meaning of justice and, consequently, injustice. This is so that they can take a lead in making their own choices regarding the care and compassion of others.

Inspection Findings

St Paul's is a Church school that has a good understanding of its people, both the pupils and adults. Leaders have successfully established and embedded a Christian vision based on Paul's words to 'shine as lights in the world'. The Christian vision, and associated values, drive decision-making in the daily life and learning of the school. The vision inspires leaders and staff to work together to ensure that all are welcomed and included. The values actively shape the behaviour in the school. An example being compassion which shapes the way adults and pupils act towards each other. Parents rightly have confidence in the school and the many ways the community is woven together. As a result, pupils are cared for and flourish in their educational and personal development. Governors are highly committed and supportive. They visit frequently, monitor and evaluate. This is particularly effective in linking into the school's planning for development. For example, their work on evaluating the progress of disadvantaged pupils. This has helped the school in their work to transform lives.

The school's Christian vision and values help shape the curriculum to ensure that it meets pupils' needs and provides opportunities for enrichment. Leaders and staff have developed the curriculum effectively over time to inspire creativity and broaden knowledge of different cultures. For example, revising books and resources to ensure diversity. Inspiring learning opportunities are central to the curriculum. A rich and extensive extra-curricular offer, including cultural and residential trips, broadens pupils' experiences. Careful planning allows those with additional needs to access the many opportunities offered. Parents appreciate the difference this makes for their children, one describing both the enrichment of learning and developing confidence. A shared language of 'awe and wonder' assists in identifying spiritual moments. However, opportunities within the curriculum happen incidentally rather than being progressively nurtured through careful planning. This results in missed opportunities to extend spiritual development and embed understanding more deeply.

Collective worship is thoughtfully planned and is a valued part of each school day. The pattern of worship recognises the Church calendar as well as exploring the biblical roots of the school's vision and values. Pupils enjoy worship and they recognise the impact of reflecting on the school's values. They describe worship as a peaceful time in which to 'imagine how we can shine our lights in the world'. Another reported how it helps them to 'grow as a flower'. Through worship, members of the school find a meaningful space for belonging and connection that supports the spiritual flourishing of pupils and adults. Prayer and reflection are an important part of the school day. The 'church school group', including parents, governors and pupils, bring valuable understanding and feedback on worship. A close partnership with the church further enhances the spiritual life of the school. Staff receive valuable support from the clergy. This strong relationship is highly valued by adults and pupils, helping them to live fulfilling lives.

The school's vision inspires a culture where pupils and adults are welcomed and valued. Leaders have created an inclusive school where people are treated well. Staff are valued through thoughtful professional development, empathetic coaching and a supportive leadership team. Leaders design an annual evaluation and planning day for all staff off site. This fosters strong relationships as well as creating 'a memorable moment' that supports adults to flourish. Pupils enthusiastically assume their leadership roles, enabling them to care for others and build strong relationships across the school community. For example, friendships across age groups are nurtured and deepened through playground buddies. Reflective strategies, such as 'thought boxes' for pupils to express themselves, are in place across the school. As a result, pupils know how to ask for help and learn in a calm and ordered environment.

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The vision and values have created a culture where pupils understand fairness and take responsibility. Pupils are learning to look outwards and beyond themselves through the relationship with a school in Malawi. Projects, fundraising and exchanging of letters all contribute to deepen their understanding the lives of others in contrasting circumstances. Pupils help organise charity fundraising events and participate in social action projects in the community. For example, litter picking and contributing to the local foodbank. As a result, they are learning to care for others and make good choices. They look after each other and have a strong sense of compassion. Older pupils find the responsibility of being 'buddies' rewarding and they take these roles seriously. For example, Year 6 pupils running peaceful playtime and leading the school council. Nevertheless, there are few opportunities for pupils to understand the deeper meaning of justice. The opportunities to make their own informed choices and take an active role in challenging injustice are limited.

Guided by the Christian vision and supported by strong leadership, RE is highly valued and a key part of the curriculum. The subject leader attends training and local network meetings provided by the diocese. Teachers are also well-supported by professional development and resources. Staff feel confident in delivering the curriculum because of this support. The RE leader has planned an ambitious and relevant curriculum, effectively drawing upon the diocesan syllabus. This is well balanced and carefully sequenced. Pupils learn about Christianity, a range of religions and worldviews as diverse and living faiths. Through the subject leadership there is a personalised approach to the curriculum that meet the needs of pupils. This includes examples of vocabulary and timelines that build and deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.

The teaching of RE is a strength. It provides opportunities to reflect on the 'big questions' and creative teaching that is challenging. RE is taught so that it provides a space for learning where pupils can build their knowledge and think more deeply. For example, one pupil described a thinking question as an opportunity to reflect on there being 'no right or wrong answer'. The approach of 'digging deeper' with thoughtfully crafted approaches to topics helps to ensure that pupils can develop a more refined understanding of concepts. Due to creative adaptation and the support received, pupils with additional needs, those who are disadvantaged and/or vulnerable pupils are enabled to become successful. Pupils enjoy learning and engage in thoughtful discussion in RE lessons. Floor books to capture class reflections and discussions are used effectively. Staff assess understanding and plan next steps needed for pupils' progression. Assessment is effective and the marking and feedback strategies extend learning. Personalised questions for older pupils encourage deeper reflection. Consequently, pupils value RE, make good progress overall and achieve well in the subject.

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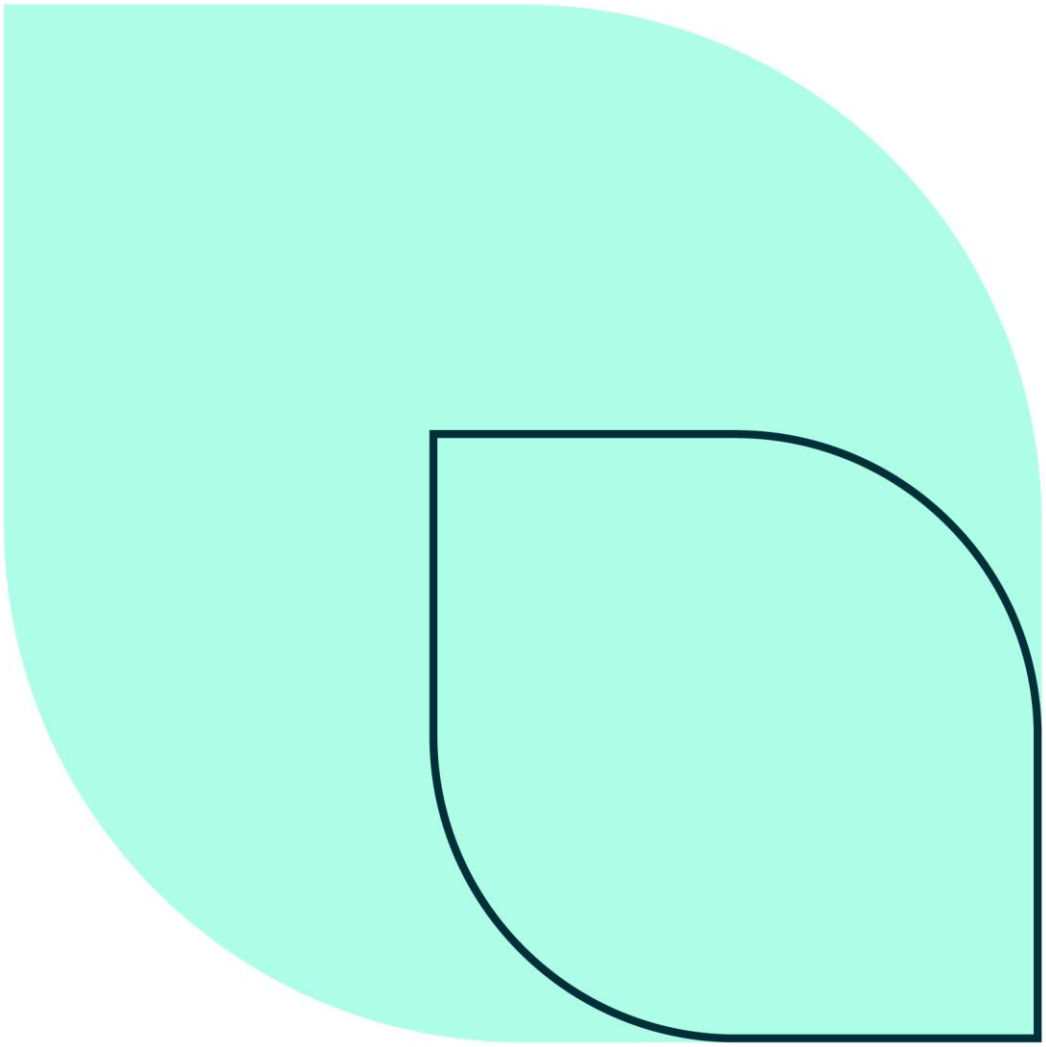
Information

Address	Elsworthy Road, London NW3 3DS		
Date	30 January 2025	URN	100046
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	189
Diocese	London		
Headteacher	Clive Hale		
Chair of Governors	James Sawtell and Lucinda Aherns (co-chairs)		
Inspector	Rachel Phillips